

AMMENDALE NORMAL INSTITUTE  
6101 Ammendale Road  
Beltsville  
Prince Georges County  
Maryland

HABS NO. MD-974

HABS  
MD  
17-BELTV,  
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PHOTOGRAPHS AND  
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey  
National Park Service  
Department of the Interior  
Washington, D.C. 20013-7127

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

AMMENDALE NORMAL INSTITUTE

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Location: 6101 Ammendale Road, Beltsville, Prince George's County, Maryland

Significance: Ammendale is an excellent example of institutional and/or ecclesiastic architecture executed in Victorian-era eclectic. It was used as a Catholic novitiate and school, operated by the Christian Brothers, since its completion in 1880 when they moved from Calvert Hall in Baltimore to this rural site.

Description: Architecturally, Ammendale is a mix of Victorian-era styles, displaying elements of Queen Anne, Italianate, and Second Empire. It is a large brick structure of three stories, with a high basement of rock-faced, random ashlar stone. The building is U-shaped, formed by a rectangular main block with projecting wings, with tiered porches along the front between the wings. There is a four-story tower on the center of the front facade.

The windows, which appear in pairs in many cases, are four-over-four-light double-hung sash with round-arched brick lintels. Both the brick lintels and stone sills connect with brick beltcourses. The roof is mansard, punctuated by dormers and large gable-fronts which form the tops of pavilions, one to either side of the central tower and one in each of the front-facing wings. Both the main entry in the first floor and one beneath it in the raised basement are covered by the tiered porches. A molded-brick stairway leads to the main entry via a landing under which is an archway to the basement entry. At the landing is a gabled entryway onto the porch. To the rear is a one-story chapel ell, resting on a high basement, with a semi-octagonal bay window.

History: Ammendale Institute was the center for the spiritual education of the Christian Brothers from 1880 until 1975. It was named for its benefactor Admiral Daniel Ammen, U.S.N. who offered the order twenty acres at \$20 per acre

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for the school, and donated an additional five acres for the adjoining St. Joseph's Chapel. The main block of the institute, along with the chapel to the rear, was completed in 1880. It was at this time that the brothers left their former home at Calvert Hall in Baltimore for rural surroundings here in Beltsville. The construction was undertaken by a Baltimore contractor by the name of McCusker, at a cost of \$33,000. The flanking wings were added in 1888 (Owens).

In addition to educating their own clergy and teachers, the Brothers taught local children. The Institute included a juniorate for younger boys, and a novitiate and scholasticate where Brothers received college training. The Institute acquired additional lands, eventually totaling 400 acres. The Brothers operated a farm on the property which supplied their food (Gabriel). The Institute has since closed and the building was sold to a developer in 1975. There was damage to the roof and the interior is now in poor condition.

Sources:

Owens, Christopher & Catherine Pierce (M  
-NCPPC) National Register of Historic  
Places Inventory-Nomination Form,  
Ammendale Normal Institute, prepared  
April 1974.

Brother Gabriel, interview with Catherine  
Lavoie, 9 October 1990. Brother Gabriel  
has been at Ammendale since the 1920s.

Historian:

Catherine C. Lavoie  
Historic American Buildings Survey  
June 1991